

**(Washington, DC)** Today, Reps. Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Donald M. Payne (D-NJ), Edolphus "Ed" Towns (D-NY), Tim Holden (D-PA), and Ted Deutch (D-FL) reacted to the Department of Education's (DOE) release of their Gainful Employment regulations. Under the *Higher Education Act*, proprietary colleges and universities and career training programs are required to offer programs that lead to gainful employment in a legally recognized occupation in order to participate in the federal student aid programs. The term "Gainful Employment," has been in the statute for over 40 years, and during the most recent reauthorization of the *Higher Education Act*

, there was no debate or discussion on a need to further define the term. DOE recently released a regulation that would make programs ineligible for federal student aid if they fail to meet one of three measures of "gainful employment" which utilize the student loan debt-to-income ratio of graduates and repayment rate of graduates in the programs rather than actual measures of educational quality such as job placement and graduation rates.

"It is deeply troubling that an administration supposedly committed to increasing college completion in the United States would propose a regulation that restricts minority access to higher education and limits job opportunities for those who need them most," **said**

**Congressman Alcee L. Hastings.**

"Career colleges are economic engines all across the country with demonstrated successful student outcomes. This misguided regulation not only impacts the thousands of students who will be left high and dry in their efforts to obtain a college degree, but also the many dedicated individuals who will lose their jobs as entire programs are eliminated. Rising student debt and unscrupulous practices are certainly legitimate concerns. However, they are not limited to private sector institutions, and this regulation fails to adequately address either issue. I remain committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to implement meaningful reforms to our higher education system that truly protect educational opportunities for all students."

"As a nurse who grew up middle class and was able to pursue a successful profession thanks to vocational training, I know how important it is for these types of schools to thrive in communities across the country," **said Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy.** "While improvements have been made to the gainful employment rule, I remain concerned that it could hurt good programs across the country and deny students a choice of educational programs. At a time when we are focused on creating jobs and making the American workforce more competitive, we need to maintain close oversight over the implementation of this rule."

"I acknowledge that the Department has taken many of the expressed concerns into

consideration. However, I remain concerned about the quality of this metric system as well as the impact this rule would have on nontraditional students – including first generation college students, displaced workers, and single parents. Proprietary colleges and universities and career training programs are strong partners in the effort to meet the President's goal of leading the world in the percentage of college graduates by 2020. My reservation is that this rule will disproportionately harm non-traditional students and limit their participation in achieving our nation's college completion goal," **said Congressman Donald M. Payne.**

"With a disproportionately high representation of minority students and first-in-the-family college attendees, I am concerned that the rule proposed by the Department may adversely impact these groups the most," **said Congressman Edolphus "Ed" Towns.** "Bad apples are present in every industry, but we cannot take a broad-stroke approach that could ultimately eliminate high-performing programs. I look forward to continuing to examine the important issues of student debt and educational value with my colleagues and our Administration. However, I cannot support a rule that has the potential to harm so many vulnerable students."

"The Department of Education has failed to adequately examine the full impact of these regulations on students and working Americans. The implementation of these misguided rules will be so burdensome and the impact so broad that even reputable schools, which have consistently provided a quality education for students often left behind by traditional institutions, will be adversely impacted meaning loss of jobs and educational opportunities for thousands of Americans," **said Congressman Tim Holden.** "Rising costs and increasing educational debt are not isolated to private sector colleges and universities. If the Department truly believes there is a correlation between gainful employment and student debt, their focus should not be narrowed to only one sector."

"My concern throughout this entire process has been for first generation college students who need access to quality education in order to find better paying jobs in this difficult economy," **said Congressman Ted Deutch.**

"We must make certain that these new rules do not undermine these vital goals and end up shutting down opportunities that so many desperately need."

In February, a bipartisan amendment to H.R. 1, the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution, passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 289-136, to block funding for the implementation of DOE's proposed Gainful Employment regulation. The amendment was introduced by House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) and Representatives Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), and Donald M. Payne (D-NJ). Additionally, on April 27th, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings

(D-FL), Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline, Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ) and a group 113 Members of Congress sent a bipartisan letter to President Obama requesting that the DOE withdraw its proposed Gainful Employment regulation.

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